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THE REASON FOR SECESSION.

Some of our friends abroad are amazingly puzzled to know the cause of this revolution now upon us. A few words will serve to show how the matter stands. When the sun arose on the 6th of November last, it shone upon 33 States in union, containing a population of 30,000,000, the most happy and prosperous people on the face of the earth. According to constitutional requirements, the people of every State (save one) came together, and cast their votes for a Chief Magistrate. The result showed that Abraham Lincoln was legally chosen President for four years. No one disputed the legality of his election; but thousands in this city and elsewhere regretted it. The people of this city voted against him strong. This we had a right to do; but not one of our respectable citizens regarded his election as a just cause of revolution. Even Mr. Stephens, now Vice-President of the Confederate States, declared that it was no good cause. South Carolina thought she had a cause, and speedily, without waiting for any overt act—indeed, long before the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln took place—met in convention, and voted herself out of the Union. Public confidence began to be disturbed, and a speedy downfall of business followed. The other cotton States tied themselves to the tail of South Carolina, and acts of seizure and violence of the most disgraceful character were sanctioned by the State authorities; and even our Federal government allowed itself to be driven out of Charleston harbor by the booming of its own cannon in the hands of the State authorities. The insult was borne with patience—insult was added to injury—until “forbearance ceased to be a virtue.” The South having lost an election which they went into, and imagining some great wrong, commenced to defy the government which had never injured them in the slightest degree, when, lo and behold, civil war is upon us! because we refuse longer to be kicked and cuffed about by them, and are not willing to give up all our forts, and even the Federal Capital itself, from which they seceded. Jefferson Davis, who has been plotting the overthrow of the government for years, would be perfectly satisfied if we would give up everything, and submit to the degradation of allowing the President of the United States to set up his government on a drum-head. The North cannot, and will not, submit to this; and those who have done most, and worked hardest for the South, are first and foremost in arming for the war. In the Sixth Ward, of this city, where Jefferson Davis has had thousands of friends, a powerful regiment is formed, and now, while we write, are on their way to resist his further encroachments upon the rights of the North. We are no politicians, and have never said or done aught against our Southern brethren. We wish them no harm, and we kindly ask them to pause and think the matter over coolly and calmly, without passion and without prejudice. We war not against them for the sake of blood; but we war against them for the maintenance of the best government that ever existed—for the time-honored flag of our country—a flag that was loved by Washington, Madison, Jackson, Clay, Webster, and every other true patriot in the land, as the “gorgeous ensign of the Republic.”

The entire North is aroused, and should it cost her a hundred thousand human lives, and a hundred millions of dollars, the government will be sustained.

OUR HISTORY OF THE WAR.

In the midst of the great struggle that is now going on for the overthrow or the permanent establishment of our government, we intend to devote a sufficient space in our paper to a record of the events of the war. In doing this, we shall avoid the flying rumors necessarily published in daily papers ambitious to give the latest news, and shall endeavor to sift out from the conflicting reports only those statements which are fully authenticated, so as to give our readers a full and accurate history of the war as it progresses.

We shall not, however, present a mere dry collection of events and dates, but shall also describe the opposite feelings and opinions of the millions that are hurling themselves against each other. It is only in the light of these feelings that the military operations can be understood, for there never was a war more likely to be influenced by reference to political combinations than the one in which we are now engaged. In the extreme South are seven States in which there seems to be a great preponderance of feeling in favor of overthrowing the government and breaking up the country; in the North are nineteen States unanimously determined to make every sacrifice and to put forth every exertion necessary to sustain the government and preserve the integrity of the nation; while between these two decided sections are eight States in which the people are divided in sentiment, generally loving the country, and anxious to preserve it in undiminished strength, though they seem to be strangely slow in coming to its defence in this hour of peril.

The struggle will doubtless be one of the most gigantic and terrific that the world has ever seen. Both sides are amply provided with implements of destruction, they are each composed of millions of brave men, and they are bent upon their opposite purposes with the deepest and most determined earnestness. The great drama is already commenced, and its thrilling scenes, with their noble self-sacrifice, sublime daring, heroic achievements and grim horrors, are passing in swift succession before us.

PURIFYING WATER FOR SOLDIERS.

During warm weather, soldiers in camp, and upon march, frequently can obtain no other water to slake their thirst and cook their food, than that of ponds, rivers and brooks. These waters are frequently charged with organic matter, which is liable to produce dysentery, and, in many instances, cholera. Soldiers should therefore become intelligent, so as to provide for every contingency in war. The preservation of their health should just be as carefully guarded to insure efficiency, as good discipline and a supply of ammunition. A few words upon impure water may therefore be of great advantage to many of them, and possibly may be the means of saving many lives.

The organic impurities of water are partly of animal and partly of vegetable origin, both of which are very objectionable, but the animal most of all. These impurities are constantly undergoing chemical changes—a fermenting process—and it is during such a state of change that the water is dangerous; because when taken into the human system in this condition, it tends to engender the same fermenting action. The nature of this action is not well known, but of the fact there can be no doubt. Rapid running streams, even if they are as brown with mud as the Mississippi river, and as much charged with organic matter, are perfectly healthy, because no chemical change—no fermentation—takes place in them. Sluggish streams and stagnant pools are the most to be dreaded. The mud may be filtered from the water of a running river by merely passing it through cotton cloth, a piece of a blanket, or flannel shirt, and we would advise soldiers to do so in most instances. This simple method of straining water will also be found a partial safeguard for stagnant water, but not a perfect one. When on march, soldiers should endeavor to endure thirst with fortitude; and when they rest for cooking their food, they should boil the water which they intend to carry with them for drinking. When cooled and agitated in the air for a few moments so as to absorb oxygen, it becomes quite pleasant to drink. The natives of the East Indies who live in flat alluvial districts, where the ponds and rivers are sluggish and charged with organic substances, boil the water

for drinking, and allow it to stand over night. This process they say prevents them from taking cholera. The reason is evident to a man of science; the high heat of boiling destroys the fermenting action. Let soldiers therefore be careful to boil and filter the impure water which they, of necessity, are frequently compelled to use.

ATTITUDE OF MARYLAND.

The position assumed by some of the people of this State is most humiliating and extraordinary. The seat of the government of the United States is on the borders of Maryland, and there is no access to it except across its soil. Our right to reach the Capital, and defend it from threatened attack, could only be disputed, it seems to us, by a horde of unlettered savages. Upon the evacuation of Fort Sumter, the Secretary of War of the Confederate States threatened to carry the secession flag to the national capital. Acting on this hint, the government called for troops to protect and defend the capital. The threat to seize it had been made time and again on the part of the secessionists, indeed counting upon the inactivity or intervention of their friends here, the meditated attack had become a pet scheme with them. This, perhaps, more than anything else, began the important work of uniting and consolidating the strength and opinions of all parties at the North. Forgetting all past differences on political issues, the determination that our governments should not be hunted and driven from the seat of its power, became fixed and unaltered in the Northern mind. The maintenance of the government itself became a question of life or death.

Troops passing through the great city of Baltimore, in response to the call of the Chief Magistrate, were set upon by a violent mob, and several were killed. A more wanton and diabolical act was never committed; and yet we find the authorities and leading citizens of that hitherto prosperous and peaceful State interceding with the President not to move any more troops across their borders. In other words, the government of the United States is coolly requested to keep quiet, and allow the city to be set upon and taken by the secessionists, and the officers of the government, and all the public archives, placed completely at their mercy. Not a word of complaint is uttered against those who threaten all the evil, but invasion of the South is the cry. Does it seem possible that a more degrading spectacle than this could be exhibited on earth? The pages of history may be searched in vain for anything like a parallel. There are noble men in Baltimore, whose loyalty to the government is unquestioned. The city abounds with them; but they have been awed down by a mob, incited to action by a venal press. Maryland now becomes the scene of action, and by the rash acts of the enemies of its peace and prosperity, must feel the first shock of war that now presses upon her soil, and, if need be, the story of Baltimore may be written over her ashes. This may become a terrible necessity. Better that a dozen of our largest cities should be destroyed, than that the Federal capital be seized and sacked by rebels, and the officers of the government placed at their mercy.

Extraordinary Cannon Shooting—A New Projectile.

We invite the attention of artillerymen and military engineers to the engravings, on another page, of the targets made with Hotchkiss' improved shot. Considering the weight of the gun and the weight of the shot, it is the best practice that we have yet seen any account of. The Armstrong gun was found, in the China war, to be so destructive to the English forces from the leaden bands flying obliquely from the shot, that it was necessary to withdraw it from action. The practice with the James gun at Watch Hill showed that his shot was still more objectionable from this same cause. The iron cap at the rear of Hotchkiss' shot operates to hold the leaden band, and prevent it from being torn or thrown off. As the flying off of a portion of the band on one side of the shot causes the latter to deviate from its initial course, and as the targets show that no such deviation took place, the device must effectually accomplish its purpose. In the interest of the service and of the country, we respectfully ask of our military authorities an examination of this shot.